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ABSTRACT

Education has traditionally been the primary method of passing on a society's culture and the values it considers to be important. Higher education institutions have not been immune to the crises in the transmission of values. Typically, in higher education basic intellectual values and virtues are mostly left for students to pick up through osmosis. This paper suggests that most students do not pick up values effectively in this manner, and this is particularly true at universities where there is not close contact or interaction between students and faculty. Research by M. Rokeach (1973; 1979) established a sense of student values in the 1970s. Subsequent research by L. Escobar-Ortloff (1999) showed a drop in importance for values other than the educationally important values of "Sense of Accomplishment" and "Intellectual (instrumental)." The paper suggests that logical positivism and personalism have contributed to this change in values orientation. The change in orientation suggests that the biggest challenge to society's institutions is the impacting of endearing values to succeeding generations. (Contains 2 tables and 13 references.) (SLD)

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Running head: HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education and the Transmission of Educational Values in Today's Society

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Higher Education and the Transmission of Educational Values in Today's Society

Education has traditionally been the primary method used through the ages of passing on a society's culture and values that it considers to be important. As William Bennett (1980) noted, "The imparting of values to each succeeding generation is one of the biggest challenges for parents, business, churches, community associations, news media, law enforcement, judicial systems, and specially, today's educational system" (p. 7).

Students on today's university campuses are exposed to a wide variety of complex situations for which they are not prepared either by experience or individual development. The relationship between student's attitudes / values and environment that supports or challenges them affects their ethical positions. University ethos affects the values and interests manifested in the campus climate, as well as, the general effect of the university experience on the student. Issues currently facing higher education, such as academic dishonesty, substance abuse, homophobia, sexism and racism suggest a reason to pursue an ethical environment on campus. The lack of community and shared sense of values that when present give both direction and purpose to the individual and institution is a pervasive problem in higher education (Bellah et al. 1985).

In India, as early as 1000 B.C., the educational system fulfilled both social and practical needs while attempting to remain faithful to the spiritual life. In China, about 500 B.C., Confucius believed that the creation of a moral man was not through hereditary means, but required a process of formal and deliberate education. In Greece, Plato presented what he thought were the four greatest individual moral qualities: wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. He

viewed justice as the aim of education. Aristotle, in his book The Nichomancheau Ethics, wrote: "The final aim of education and of the State should be the happiness of the individual. If happiness has a social function it is that through it alone can men achieve individual perfection" (p. 619).

According to Rokeach (1979), in today's world the major determinants of human values are culture, society, and society's institutions. Each one of those institutions specializes in the transmission and implementation of a certain cluster of values. At the same time all institutions are interrelated and interdependent. The close relationship between many of society's institutions has been characterized by conflicts or ultimately reflects the social situation of the moment. Today's institutions have violated their mission of transmitting values that belong specifically to the institution and of passing its unique values from generation to generation.

Lickona (1992) writes in the book Educating for Character that "Without ethical training, many teachers tend to treat moral judgment as if it were simply a matter of personal opinion. That is a mistake of moral relativism, an error that has deep roots in contemporary culture" (p.230). Ryan (1988) asserts that schools of education should only recommend the morally literate for teacher certification. Teacher educators should be assured that preservice teachers are receiving through their liberal arts education an understanding of the core ideals underlying Western democracy, ideals such as: individual responsibility, social contracts, equality, and inalienable rights. Future teachers must be expected to possess and build upon moral literacy. Teacher educators should not be expected to provide the student moral literacy, but to provide the opportunity to build upon it.

Higher education institutions have not been immune to the crises in the transmission of

values. Professors and higher education institutions promote a variety of values, whether they do so unconsciously or with self-awareness. They inevitably do and should promulgate values, both intellectual and moral and to some degree most educators know this. However, some university professors believe that public education deals, or should deal, only with "facts". This opinion has come into play in the current "culture wars". Manno (1995), speaking of "outcome standards" argues that such standards should "be academic and not deal with nonacademic concerns like student's values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors . . ." Typically, in higher education, basic intellectual values and virtues, especially those other than honesty, are mostly left for students to pick up through the process of osmosis. This has been true not only in the traditional intellectual values, but of basic disciplinary assumptions and ways of working. Professors have most often thought themselves as presenting subject matter or conveying subject matter to students, rather than thinking of themselves as teaching students or even, helping students to learn and develop. Important values were through to be obtained through osmosis or at least by imitation. Faculty were assumed to model important values and intellectual virtues, etc. which would "rub off" on students without being addressed directly. The authors of this paper suggest that most students do not effectively pick up values and virtues in this manner and that this is particularly true at universities where there is not close contact or interaction between students and faculty.

Values education programs in schools usually focus on those values that are universally accepted by almost all cultures and religions. Gibbs and Earley (1994) identified these universal values as (a) compassion, (b) courage, (c) courtesy, (d) fairness, (e) honesty, (f) kindness, (g)

loyalty, (h) perseverance, (i) respect, and (j) responsibility. Titus (1997) considered these core values compatible with the democratic values of freedom, equality, justice, and human dignity. Lickona (1993) related that core citizenship values affirm human dignity, promote individual and common good, and protect human rights. He wrote that "the test of reversibility and universality is met and these core values define democratic responsibilities and are recognized as important by all civilized people" (p. 46). Not to teach these values would be a "grave moral failure".

Escobar – Ortloff (1999) doctoral dissertation investigated, in part, differences in hierarchical values (social and moral) that existed among undergraduate teacher education students completing their degree program at a major university in Mississippi. Students ranked ordered 18 instrumental (moral) and 18 terminal (social) values in order of importance to them personally. The authors of this paper compared the results of the Escobar-Ortloff study with an investigation conducted 32 years earlier by Rokeach. Both studies investigated the placement of "identified" moral and social values within a student's value hierarchy. Both studies used the *Rokeach Values Survey*, although the Ortloff-Escobar study used the most recent survey instrument that presented only minor changes when compared to the original 1968 version

To better understand and appreciate the comparison between the two studies, it is important to understand Rokeach's definition of values and value's system, and be able to identify which values he considered important to those who value education. Rokeach defined value as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (p. 5) and values system as "an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-state of existence along a continuum of relative importance" (p. 5). The

Rokeach Values Survey is divided into 18 instrumental values (beliefs concerning desirable modes of conduct) and 18 terminal values (beliefs concerning desirable end-states of existence). Rokeach's educationally important values were determined by measurements of the perceived value by institutions of higher education and by rankings given to certain values by professors of education and by school administrators. Rokeach found that the top four terminal values given those who value education are: sense of accomplishment, self-respect, wisdom, and freedom. The top four instrumental values are: responsible, capable, broad-minded, and intellectual.

Table 1 displays the four values in 1968 considered by Rokeach (1973) to be important to those who value education along with similar data from the 1999, Escobar-Ortloff study. Table 2 present the rankings of all 18 terminal and 18 instrumental values from the Escobar-Ortloff study, while Table 3 offers the Rokeach' results. A close look at Table 1 indicates that with the exception of the "educationally" important values "Sense of Accomplishment" (terminal) and "Intellectual" (instrumental) all other values have witnessed a considerable drop in importance in their ranking over the 32-year period from 1968 to 1999. In 1968 "Self-respect" was ranked fifth in importance by college students, but in 1999 this value dropped to 10th as student's assigned greater importance to values such as "Exciting Life," which placed second and "Pleasure" eighth. The instrumental "educational" values also experienced a similar trend: "Broad-minded" in 1968 placed fourth in importance among the 18 instrumental values by college students and in 1999 it assumed the 10th position. "Responsible," once placed second, now it ranks ninth behind the instrumental values of "Loving," "Polite," and "Helpful."

Rokeach (1979) in his book Understanding Human Values related that during his research, educational values typically were found at the top of the values hierarchy (among the

first six values) among those who valued education. According to Escobar-Ortloff (1999), the pre-service, teacher education students who participated in her study placed less importance on the identified "education" values than the general, undergraduate college students surveyed over 30 years ago. The authors of this article suggest that many changes have occurred within America's society and higher education institutions that have contributed to variances in values orientation over time. It is further suggested that the presence of two major philosophies have been major factors in this change of values orientation: logical positivism and personalism.

Logical Positivism established the difference between "fact" and "value." This philosophy held that only what can be scientifically demonstrated is a fact; others are simply emotional expressions of feelings. As a consequence of this philosophy, a value judgment becomes just a personal opinion rather than a rational, objective claim about what is good or bad. Lickona (1992) wrote of this philosophy, "Morality was privatized—made to seem purely a matter of private choice, not a matter for public debate and certainly not for public transmission through the schools" (p. 8). Under logical positivism, educators do not make a value judgment of right or wrong. As a consequence, nothing is objectively right or wrong; morality is just what is right for the individual.

Utilitarism is related to the concept of Positivism. Utilitarism supports the belief that in order to live a good life one must obtain pleasure or happiness and avoid pain. This movement has had a significant effect in the United States through influencing its institutional citizenry. When considering the extent to which Positivism and Utilitarism have influenced institutions, it is not surprising that those values which typically characterize educational institutions (wisdom, capable, responsible, etc.) have been given less importance by the college students of today.

A second movement of importance that influenced society's values orientation has been *Personalism*. This philosophy influenced and accelerated changes in value hierarchy in a very dramatic way. It led people to think of themselves as free, independent individuals rather than members of a community. What becomes "all important" are the rights and freedom of the individual. The word "Self" occupies an important place. One gives importance to self-concept, self-image, self-esteem, self-reliance, self-help, self-awareness, self-actualization, self-determination, etc., but oftentimes social responsibility and commitment assume a lesser importance. Individuality assumes such importance in this philosophy that any restriction on freedom is taken as a threat to one's individuality. However, "individualism" the belief that people can set, work toward, and achieve their personal goals, and do so with limited dependency on others, has proven to be highly useful and effective in the individualistic North American society.

In general, society depends upon institutions to inculcate its values in an agreeable way, but in an individualistic society, as in the United States, this dependence becomes even more important. Individualistic cultures tend to depend a great deal on organizations and institutions; therefore, the responsibility of institutions towards promoting and cultivating important values becomes highly significant. Samavar and Porter (1991) wrote "Organizations invade private life and the clans to which one belongs, and individuals trust group decisions" (p. 128).

Recognizing America's dependence upon institutions in promoting its values, society should reflect upon the following issues:

1. Should the university educational system of today assume major responsibility in the transmitting of educational values that society considers important to other generations?

2. Should the university system place less importance to its educational mission and only reflect the latest changes in society?

3. Should the basic values or premises upon which higher education institutions are built change as society and its institutions evolve?

4. Should values typically associated with those who place importance to education be taught on campus and promoted in the university classroom?

The authors of this paper agree with Bennett (1980) that today the biggest challenge to society's institutions is the imparting of endearing values to succeeding generations. Important institutions such as higher education must re-examine their mission and give importance to transmitting and implementing educational values into their day-to-day activities while at the same time discouraging incompetent and immoral behavior.

Table 1

Ranking from Rokeach (1968) and Escobar-Ortloff (1999) Studies.

Ranking of the Educational Terminal Values	1968 Study	1999 Study
1. Freedom: refers to independence, free choice.	3	7
2. Self Rrespect: refers to self-esteem.	5	10
3. Wisdom: refers to a mature understanding of life.	4	15
4. Sense of Accomplishment: refers to a lasting contribution.	6	3

Ranking of the Educational Instrumental Values	1968 Study	1999 Study
1. Broadminded: refers to open-minded.	4	10
2. Capable: refers to competent and effective.	7	14
3. Intellectual: refers to intelligent and reflective	12	11
4. Responsible: refers to dependable and reliable.	2	9

Table 2

Undergraduate Instrumental and Terminal Value Rankings (Ortloff-Escobar Study, 1999)

	Highest Instrumental Values		Highest Terminal Values
1.0	Self-Controlled	1.0	Equality
2.0	Independent	2.0	Exciting Life
3.0	Logical	3.0	Sense of Accomplishment
4.0	Loyal	4.0	True Friendship
5.0	Polite	5.0	Salvation
6.0	Loving	6.0	Family Security
7.0	Imaginative	7.0	Freedom
8.0	Helpful	8.0	Pleasure
9.0	Responsible	9.0	National Security
10.0	Broad-Minded	10.0	Self-Respect
11.0	Intellectual	11.0	Inner Harmony
12.0	Forgiving	12.0	Health
13.0	Obedient	13.0	Social Recognition
14.0	Capable	14.0	Mature Love
15.0	Ambitious	15.0	Wisdom
16.0	Honest	16.0	Comfortable Life
17.0	Clean	17.0	World at Peace
18.0	Courageous	18.0	World of Beauty

Table 3

Undergraduate Instrumental and Terminal Value Rankings (Rokeach Study, 1968)

Highest Instrumental Values		Highest Terminal Values	
1.0	Honest	1.0	Family Security
2.0	Responsible	2.0	World at Peace
3.0	Courageous	3.0	Freedon
4.0	Broadminded	4.0	Wisdom
5.0	Ambitious	5.0	Self-Respect
6.0	Forgiving	6.0	Sense of Accomplishment
7.0	Capable	7.0	Happiness
8.0	Self-Controlled	8.0	Equality
9.0	Helpful	9.0	Inner Harmony
10.0	Loving	10.0	National Security
11.0	Independent	11.0	Salvation
12.0	Intellectual	12.0	True Friendship
13.0	Clean	13.0	Comfortable Life
14.0	Cheerful	14.0	Mature Love
15.0	Polite	15.0	World of Beauty
16.0	Logical	16.0	Pleasure
17.0	Imaginative	17.0	Social Recognition
18.0	Obedient	18.0	Exciting Life

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